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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/893,750	06/29/2001	Naoyuki Kawanishi	Q64948	3354

7590 11/08/2002
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EXAMINER

CHEA, THORL

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
1752	8

DATE MAILED: 11/08/2002

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/893,750

Applicant(s)

KAWANISHI ET AL.

Examiner

Thorl Chea

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) [X] Responsive to communication(s) filed on 27 August 2002.
2a) [] This action is FINAL. 2b) [X] This action is non-final.
3) [] Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under Ex parte Quayle, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) [X] Claim(s) 1-22 is/are pending in the application.
4a) Of the above claim(s) 15-22 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
5) [] Claim(s) ___ is/are allowed.
6) [X] Claim(s) 1-14 is/are rejected.
7) [] Claim(s) ___ is/are objected to.
8) [] Claim(s) ___ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) [] The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
10) [] The drawing(s) filed on ___ is/are: a) [] accepted or b) [] objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
11) [] The proposed drawing correction filed on ___ is: a) [] approved b) [] disapproved by the Examiner.
If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.
12) [] The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

- 13) [X] Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
a) [X] All b) [] Some * c) [] None of:
1. [X] Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. [] Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. [] Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
14) [] Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application).
a) [] The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
15) [] Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

Attachment(s)

- 1) [X] Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
2) [] Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
3) [] Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) _____.
4) [] Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). _____.
5) [] Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
6) [] Other: _____

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DETAILED ACTION

1. Applicant's election without traverse of claims 1-14 in Paper No. 7 is acknowledged.

Specification

2. The disclosure is objected to because of the following informalities. See the term "wafer" on pages 13, 16. There are many occurrences that the term "wafer" appears in lieu of "water". Appropriate correction is required.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

3. The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

Claims 1-14 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. The scope of protection sought for "silver salt of an organic acid" is indefinite since the specification fails to clearly define the scope thereof. The specification disclosure such as example 1 for instance under "preparation of organic silver salt grains A" shows the use of behenic acid to prepare silver behenate, while the term "organic acid" is used throughout the specification discloses, the specification fails to provide the scope thereof or show the type of organic acid used in claimed process. Therefore, Applicant fails to particularly point out and distinctly claim the inventive subject matter and in particular fails to set forth the metes and bounds of the invention.

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The term "dispersoid" in claim 11 is unclear as to what to be considered as "dispersoid". Claim 12 is unclear with respect to basis for 1-10 weight percent (1-10 weight % with respect to what?).

Claim 10 is unclear with the processing steps. Note especially the language "then dispersion operation is performed by high pressure homogenizer or high speed rotary homomixer in the presence of dispersing agent, and thereby by-product salts are removed by ultrafiltration after or during the dispersion operation". There is confusing between the step of preparing the grain of silver salt and the dispersion operation. It is unclear as to when the dispersing agent is used.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

4. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negatived by the manner in which the invention was made.

5. Claims 1-9 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being obvious over Kawanishi et al ('546).

The applied reference has a common inventors with the instant application. Based upon the earlier effective U.S. filing date of the reference, it constitutes prior art only under 35 U.S.C. 102(e). This rejection under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) might be overcome by: (1) a showing under 37 CFR 1.132 that any invention disclosed but not claimed in the reference was derived from the inventor of this application and is thus not an invention "by another"; (2) a showing of a date of invention for the claimed subject matter of the

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application which corresponds to subject matter disclosed but not claimed in the reference, prior to the effective U.S. filing date of the reference under 37 CFR 1.131; or (3) an oath or declaration under 37 CFR 1.130 stating that the application and reference are currently owned by the same party and that the inventor named in the application is the prior inventor under 35 U.S.C. 104, together with a terminal disclaimer in accordance with 37 CFR 1.321(c). For applications filed on or after November 29, 1999, this rejection might also be overcome by showing that the subject matter of the reference and the claimed invention were, at the time the invention was made, owned by the same person or subject to an obligation of assignment to the same person. See MPEP § 706.02(I)(1) and § 706.02(I)(2). See column 1-28 and Figs 3-4 which use the use of similar apparatus, i.e., having closed mixing mean. The sequence of steps of mixing the silver ions and alkali metal salt of an organic acid would have been found obvious. In general, the transposition of the process steps or the splitting of one step into two, where the processes are substantially identical or equivalent in term of function, manner and result, was held to be not patentably distinguish the processes. Ex parte Rubin 128 USPQ 440 (PTO BdPatApp 1959).

Double Patenting

6. The nonstatutory double patenting rejection is based on a judicially created doctrine grounded in public policy (a policy reflected in the statute) so as to prevent the unjustified or improper timewise extension of the "right to exclude" granted by a patent and to prevent possible harassment by multiple assignees. See *In re Goodman*, 11 F.3d 1046, 29 USPQ2d 2010 (Fed. Cir. 1993); *In re Longi*, 759 F.2d 887, 225 USPQ 645 (Fed. Cir. 1985); *In re Van Ornum*, 686 F.2d 937, 214 USPQ 761 (CCPA 1982); *In re Vogel*, 422 F.2d 438, 164 USPQ 619 (CCPA 1970); and, *In re Thorington*, 418 F.2d 528, 163 USPQ 644 (CCPA 1969).

A timely filed terminal disclaimer in compliance with 37 CFR 1.321(c) may be used to overcome an actual or provisional rejection based on a nonstatutory double

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patenting ground provided the conflicting application or patent is shown to be commonly owned with this application. See 37 CFR 1.130(b).

Effective January 1, 1994, a registered attorney or agent of record may sign a terminal disclaimer. A terminal disclaimer signed by the assignee must fully comply with 37 CFR 3.73(b).

7. Claims 1-9 are rejected under the judicially created doctrine of double patenting over claims 1-5 of U. S. Patent No. 6,472,546 since the claims, if allowed, would improperly extend the "right to exclude" already granted in the patent.

The subject matter claimed in the instant application is fully disclosed in the patent and is covered by the patent since the patent and the application are claiming common subject matter, as follows: both claimed invention are directed to the same use of closed mixing mean to form grains of non-photosensitive fatty acid silver salt grains.

Furthermore, there is no apparent reason why applicant was prevented from presenting claims corresponding to those of the instant application during prosecution of the application which matured into a patent. See *In re Schneller*, 397 F.2d 350, 158 USPQ 210 (CCPA 1968). See also MPEP § 804.

8. Claims 10-14 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over EP 1063566A1 (EP'566). See EP'566 abstract; pages 31-32, claims 1-19 and Fig 1 and page 3, paragraph [0015]. The EP'566 discloses same process of forming silver salt of an organic, and process of removing by-product salts and the use of dispersion agent in aqueous dispersion, except do not discloses the use of high pressure homogenizer or high speed rotary homomixer, but it is shown on page 3, paragraph [0015] that it has been used in fine dispersion operation of fatty acid silver salt.

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Therefore, the use thereof to aid the dispersion process would have been found prima facie obvious to the worker of ordinary skill in the art.

Conclusion


9. The lengthy specification has not been checked to the extent necessary to determine the presence of all possible minor errors. Applicant's cooperation is requested in correcting any errors of which applicant may become aware in the specification.

10. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Thorl Chea whose telephone number is (703)308-3498. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F (9:30 - 6:00).

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Janet C Baxter can be reached on (703)308-2303. The fax phone numbers for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned are (703)872-9301 for regular communications and (703)872-9311 for After Final communications.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is (703)308-0661.

tchea *tlc*
November 2, 2002


Thorl Chea
Primary Examiner
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